

Today there are more than 3,800 working offshore platforms in the Gulf of Mexico, which are subject to rigorous environmental standards. These platforms result in 55,000 jobs, with over 35,000 of them located offshore. The platforms working in federal waters also have an excellent environmental record. According to the United States Coast Guard, for the 1980–1999 period 7.4 billion barrels of oil was produced in federal offshore waters with less than 0.001 percent spilled. That is a 99.999 percent record for clean operations.

According to the Minerals Management Service about 100 times more oil seeps naturally from the seabed into U.S. marine waters than from offshore oil and gas activities.

The Nation's record for safe and clean offshore natural gas and oil operations is excellent. And to maintain and improve upon this excellent record, Minerals Management Service continually seeks operational improvements that will reduce the risks to offshore personnel and to the environment. The Office of Minerals Management constantly re-evaluates its procedures and regulations to stay abreast of technological advances that will ensure safe and clean operations, as well as to increase awareness of their importance.

It is reported that the amount of oil naturally released from cracks on the floor of the ocean have caused more oil to be in sea water than work done by oil rigs.

Most rigs under current Interior regulation must have an emergency shutdown process in the event of a major accident which immediately seals the pipeline. Other safety features include training requirements for personnel, design standards and redundant safety systems. Last year the Office of Minerals Management conducted 16,000 inspections of offshore rigs in federal waters.

In addition to these precautions each platform always has a team of safety and environmental specialists on board to monitor all drilling activity.

These oil and gas rigs have become artificial reefs for crustaceans, sea anemones, and small aquatic fish. These conditions have created habitat for larger fish, making rigs a favored location to fish by local people.

I will be offering an amendment later today with Congressman NICK LAMPSON to create a reporting process to access the operation of oil and gas wells off the coast of Texas and Louisiana.

We can all agree that the United States does need to develop a long-term national energy policy. Our nation's energy priorities should remain constant regardless of the changing dynamics of energy supply. For this reason, I hope that the process of completing work on the bill will allow for open debate and honest compromise.

#### SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill, (H.R. 4) to enhance energy conservation, research and development and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 4—The Securing America's Future Energy Act of 2001. This bill will at long last define our national energy policy so that the United States will have an ample, affordable and increasingly efficient energy supply for the future.

It is time that the American people declare independence from foreign sources of energy. We need to develop our own resources and our own technology so that the economy and security of the United States will not be adversely affected by decisions of foreign energy suppliers in the future.

Mr. Chairman, on March 20, 2000, in the 106th Congress, I introduced H.R. 4035, The National Resource Governance Act of 2000 (the NRG Bill). The goal of this bill was to establish a commission that would investigate U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources, evaluate proposals that would make the United States energy self-sufficient, explore alternative energy sources, investigate areas currently not being used for oil exploration and expand drilling in areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve and offshore. This commission would then submit its findings and recommendations to Congress and the President so that steps could be taken to design and implement a national energy policy.

I introduced the NRG Bill because I believed that our lack of a comprehensive national energy policy would lead to energy shortages and a continued dependence on OPEC. My concerns continued and on November 11, 2000 and again on October 4, 2000, I wrote then-Energy Secretary Bill Richardson to share with him some of my concerns and the concerns of my constituents. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of this letter be entered into the RECORD.

NOVEMBER 1, 2000.

Hon. BILL RICHARDSON,  
Secretary of Energy,  
Forrestal Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: On October 4th, I sent a letter to you asking for your response to reports run in The Wall Street Journal and other media suggesting that crude oil released by the Administration from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) may in fact be diverted to Europe. Assuming that the SPR oil would not be diverted to Europe, I further asked that you reconcile the apparent disparities between the Administration's claim that tapping the SPR would forestall a winter home heating oil crises in the Northeast United States, and independent reports that the SPR oil would not even reach the intended markets until early next year.

I am extremely disappointed that you have not yet responded to these two basic, yet important questions. In my October 4th letter I asked that you provide me with "an immediate assessment" of the aforementioned media reports. I specifically requested that you provide me with a report "early next week" so that I might convey the information to my constituents who are preparing themselves for the onset of winter weather.

Since my last letter to you, officials from your Department have testified to Congress about the President's decision to tap the SPR. I understand that acting Assistant Sec-

retary of Energy Robert S. Kripowicz acknowledged, in one of those hearings, that the release of 30 million barrels of crude oil from the SPR may yield only an additional 250,000 barrels of home-heating oil for the Northeast, including my state of Pennsylvania, which face possible fuel shortages this winter. If Mr. Kripowicz can provide answers to Congress regarding the Administration's recent actions, I fail to understand why an answer to my letter has not been forthcoming.

Mr. Secretary, Pennsylvanians are afraid that the United States has no energy policy. We wonder how long we will continue to be dependent on foreign sources of energy. Unfortunately, your failure to answer basic questions about your Department's actions only serves to confirm those fears. Please provide my office with a response to the questions raised in my letter of October 4th, by November 8th.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE W. GEKAS,  
Member of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, my letters went unanswered as did the concerns of so many Americans worried about energy prices, supply, the environment and national security. Unfortunately, my concerns became a reality. This past winter we saw what the lack of a comprehensive national energy policy meant to the people of California as they experienced unannounced rolling blackouts. We also saw the implications of high gasoline and energy prices on our economy. H.R. 4 will define a national energy policy that will avert such situations in the future.

Today, I not only rise to support H.R. 4, the Securing America's Future Energy Act of 2001, but I rise to commend President Bush, Vice President Cheney and the rest of the members of the National Energy Policy Development Group for their leadership in proposing a much needed national energy policy. The development and implementation of this bold and innovative policy will certainly insure that the United States will be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, be more efficient and thus more environmentally sensitive, and will also provide every American with access to ample and affordable energy.

#### SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill, (H.R. 4) to enhance energy conservation, research and development and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4, Securing America's Future Energy Act.

First, let me commend President Bush for his leadership and the committees in the House who have worked on this most important national priority.

Mr. Chairman, gas prices are down, and so far this summer in New Jersey, the lights have